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AUTHOR Christensen, Torkil
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ABSTRACT

A 1984 survey of 830 students at 3 private colleges in Sapporo, Japan investigated perceptions of non-Japanese language teachers as role models (persons who are not actively seeking to alter the behavior of those around them) and social change agents (persons who actively attempt to initiate or serve as a catalyst in community improvement). The results were then compared with those of a similar survey of students in three language schools. The survey instrument consisted of 7 demographic questions, 28 attitude questions, and 1 essay question. The essay question asked about the positive and negative aspects of studying with a non-Japanese language instructor. Overall, the responses indicate that the non-Japanese language instructor provides a challenging and interesting learning experience that is welcomed by the students. Results did not vary greatly from those of the language school survey. The survey questions, in both Japanese and English, are appended. (MSE)

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Torkil Christensen

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Student attitudes to non-Japanese language instructors in Japan

TORKIL CHRISTENSEN

Introduction

This is a report of student attitudes to non-Japanese language instructors in Japan. The report is the result of a survey that was administered to students at three private colleges in Sapporo in November 1984.

The survey was one of three surveys inquiring into attitudes to and perceptions of non-Japanese language instructors in Japan. The two other surveys were of non-Japanese language instructors and students at private language schools. The results of the two other surveys have been reported elsewhere (Christensen and Upson, 1985).

The purpose of the survey was to inquire into perceptions of non-Japanese language instructors as "role-models" (persons who are not actively seeking to alter or change the behavior of those about them) and "social change agents" (persons who actively attempt to initiate or serve as a catalyst in the process of community improvement,definitions from Upson and Christensen, 1984).

This paper details the responses of college students and compares these with the results obtained from the survey of students at private language schools.

The Survey

The survey (Appendix 1) was administered to 830 students in November 1984. The purpose of the survey was explained by the person (instructor) administering it, and the first page provided instructions in Japanese for filling in the survey. There were seven demographic questions and 28 survey questions, followed by an essay question (Appendix 1). No unmarked surveys were returned, but zero to thirteen respondents (average five) gave no response to particular questions. The "no opinion"option was taken by 4-34%, as shown in Fig 1.

The surveys were administered during regular classes and took 15-20 minutes to complete, the students seemed interested in the survey, as shown by the few unmarked questions and the sometimes extensive responses to the essay question.

The Results

The Demographic Questions

The respondents were 46% female and 54% male, and the sex differences for the different groups are shown in Fig. 2, 99% were below 22 years of age and only one percent older.

Q	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	0	Av./Mode
1	49	3	15	3	19	1	2	0	2	6	A:2.62±2.01
2	26	5	19	3	25	2	5	1	7	7	A:3.71±2.38
3	35	6	24	3	21	1	2	1	3	4	A:3.03±2.07
4	28	4	16	3	22	0	1	0	2	24	A:3.07±1.97M:0
5	42	4	15	2	20	1	2	0	1	13	A:2.71±1.91
6	8	3	14	3	28	1	4	0	5	34	A:4.36±2.08M:0
7	34	6	19	3	24	1	1	0	1	11	A:2.92±1.86
8	40	3	18	3	20	2	3	0	5	6	A:3.09±2.32
9	6	1	9	3	25	3	10	2	17	24	A:5.62±2.42
10	9	1	7	2	18	2	8	2	24	27	M:5 9 0
11	44	7	16	2	18	1	3	0	2	7	A:2.65±2.01
12	68	6	11	2	8	0	1	0	1	3	A:1.86±1.59
13	16	3	13	3	31	3	9	2	6	14	A:4.39±2.34
14	20	3	13	4	29	3	8	1	6	13	A:4.17±2.38
15	6	2	8	3	30	3	6	1	10	31	A:5.11±2.21M:0
16	30	4	14	2	22	1	3	0	3	21	A:3.26±2.24M:0
17	19	2	12	3	25	2	6	1	14	16	M:1 5 (9)
18	17	2	12	3	25	3	7	1	15	15	M:1 5 9
19	12	2	9	2	21	2	10	2	21	19	M: (1) 5 9
20	40	4	12	2	22	2	3	1	8	6	M:1 5
21	4	0	5	2	14	2	11	3	35	24	A:6.94±2.39M:0
22	3	1	6	1	21	2	11	1	20	34	A:6.24±2.29M:0
23	11	2	11	2	19	2	10	2	21	20	M:5 9 0
24	8	1	9	3	36	3	12	3	18	9	A:5.54±2.36
25	3	0	7	2	27	4	14	2	18	23	A:6.05±2.17M:0
26	31	3	16	4	19	0	2	0	0	25	A:2.84±1.81M:0

Fig. 1: Results of the Japanese student survey. Survey questions (Q) and responses in percent (1:yes/very; 5: sometimes; 9: no; 0: no opinion, for Q26 only 1: positive; 5: neutral; 9: negative; 0: no opinion). Right hand column shows averages (A), standard deviations (±), and /or high incidences (M).

English study outside regular school was less than one year for 18%, for 10% it was 1-2 years, for 9% 2-3 years, 4% 3-5 years, for 5%over 5 years, and none for 54%. The period of study with a non-Japanese instructor was under one year for 71% of the students, 1-2 years for 18%, 2-3 years for 6%, and over three years for 5%. The number of different non-Japanese language instructors was one for 54%of the students, 2 or 3 for 13%, 4 for 24%, and 5 or more for 9%.

The Survey Questions

Appendix 1 details the questions of the Japanese survey in Japanese and English, and the results are shown in Fig. 1. The first and last three question are of a general nature, with the survey questions proper being questions 4-23 (incl.).

The first three questions indicate that the respondents wish to study with a non-

College and year of study	Major						
	English (E)			non-English (nE)			Grand Total
	Female	Male	Total	Female	Male	Total	
A 2nd yr. (A2)	30	59	89	9	303	312	401
B 1st yr. (B1)				4	82	86	86
C 1st yr. (C1)	136	0	136				136
2nd yr. (C2)	106	0	106	101	0	101	207
Total	272	59	311	114	385	499	830

Fig. 2: Respondents to the survery. The A and B colleges are four year colleges, and C is a two year junior college. The abbreviations in brackets are used in the text, f. ex. the C college 2nd year non-English majors are abbreviated as C2nE.

Japanese instructor (the average is the second closest to yes, only question 12 is closer) and that they both enjoy and feel some need for studying. The final three questions show that the students are studying seriously, at least some of the time, that progress may not be as rapid as they could wish, and that the presence of non-Japanese language instructors is considrerd a positive element.

Intergroup differences: The results in Fig. 1 are averages for the 830 respondents and in some cases there were wide differences between groups of students. The following details the questions where intergroup differences were large.

For Question 1 the B1nE (college B non-English majors, see Fig. 2 for a full explanation of the abbreviations) students had the strongest wish to study with non-Japanese language instructors, 1.9±1.5, and the A2nE (college A non-English majors) the least, 3.4±2.3. The AE (college A English majors) and CE fell between these two values (A2E 2.1±1.6, C1E 2.0±1.5, C2E 2.3±1.7).

For Question 2 the A2nE found the study least enjoyable, 4.9 ±2.5, while the C2E had the lowest average (found it most enjoyable) 2.5±1.6. For the A2E, studying at the same school as the A2nE students, the average was 3.0±2.0 and highest of the english majors. This shows that English majors in general find study with non-Japanese language instructors more enjoyable than non-English majors.

The responses to Question 3 showed the A2E students to feel the strongest need for studying foreign languages, 1.9±1.4, and C2E showed the least, 3.9±2.0.

Question 24 showed the C2E students to study languages most seriously, 4.5 ±1.9, with their non-English major colleagues the least serious, 7.3±2.2.

The B1nE students were most satisfied with their progress (Question25), 5.1 ±2.2, with the C2nE students the least satisfied, 6.6±2.2.

The different groups of students showed no great differences in their generally positive evaluation of the influence of non-Japanese language instructors on Japanese society average 2.8±1.8 (Fig. 1).

The averages of the survey questions (Questions 4 to 23) for the different student groups were generally around the average for all the students. Five questions had differences above two points between particular groups:

Question 6, about non-Japanese language instructors as role models, B1nE at 3.6±2.0 vs. A2E at 5.6±2.3.

Question 17, about learning non-Japanese customs when studying with non-Japanese language instructors, C1E at 3.6±2.3 vs. A2nE at 5.7±2.8.

Question 18, about learning non-Japanese culture when studying with non-Japanese language instructors, C2E at 3.3±2.2 vs. A2nE at 6.0±2.7.

Question 19, about whether customs and values change by studying with non-Japanese language instructors, C1E at 4.3±2.6 vs. A2nE at 6.5±2.5.

Question 23, whether the student's lifestyle changes by studying foreign languages, C1E at 4.3±2.6 and C2nE AT 4.3±2.7 vs. A2nE AT 6.5±2.6.

Differences among the A2nE students: The 312 A2nE students were studying with three different instructors, and the results for these three instructors (Ⅰ, Ⅱ, and Ⅲ) were tabulated separately to determine differences between very similar groups of students, only three questions had inter-instructor differences of more than one point:

Question 1, inquiring into the wish to study foreign languages with a non-Japanese instructor, Instructor Ⅰ at 3.0±2.2vs. Instructor Ⅲ at 4.1±2.7.

Question 13, asking whether non-Japanese language instructors are good at teaching grammar, Instructor Ⅰ at 4.0±2.3 vs. Instructor Ⅲ at 5.4±2.6.

Question 17, as above, Instructor Ⅱ at 5.1±2.9 vs. Instructor Ⅲ at 6.2±2.7.

It is not clear whether the differences are due to different reactions to the questions or due to differences caused by the (usually only one) non-Japanese language instructor these students have been exposed to. However, the small number of differences may indicate that perceptions of the particular instructor play a role.

University students vs. students at private language schools

The survey of students at private language schools was conducted in the autumn of 1984 at private language schools in Sapporo, and the results have been reported in detail elsewhere (Christensen and Upson, 1985). The survey results are shown in Fig 3, and the following compares the responses from the university students with the responses from the students in private language schools.

The most obvious difference between the two groups of students is that the students in private language schools generally pay for the studies themselves, that the language study is not a full time study, and that the students themselves have chosen to take part in the study; the students generally do not derive any direct benefit (diploma, credits, etc.) from the study.

The university students study foreign language as a compulsory part of a two or four year curriculum, and they have little say in what instructor they are assigned to; usually the costs of the study are borne by the student's parents and the goal is a diploma at graduation.

Q	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	0	Av./Mode
1	84	6	5	0	3	0	0	0	0	1	A:1.34±1.01
2	64	9	12	2	9	1	0	0	1	1	A:1.92±1.56
3	45	5	19	1	21	0	2	0	3	3	A:2.72±2.02
4	29	5	14	2	22	0	0	0	0	28	A:2.79±1.74M:0
5	39	6	18	4	19	0	0	0	0	14	A:2.56±1.69
6	9	3	13	1	22	0	1	0	3	46	A:3.95±2.06M:0
7	39	5	22	3	22	0	0	0	0	8	A:2.62±1.68
8	61	5	17	1	10	0	2	0	1	3	A:2.03±1.65
9	8	1	10	2	20	2	7	3	20	28	M:5 9 0
10	6	1	10	2	23	1	6	2	19	29	M:5 9 0
11	48	5	21	2	14	0	0	0	1	8	A:2.31±1.67
12	61	8	15	1	11	0	0	0	0	3	A:1.95±1.48
13	22	6	19	3	26	1	7	0	3	13	A:3.61±2.10
14	28	3	21	3	24	0	4	1	2	13	A:3.30±2.05
15	8	4	9	1	29	2	6	0	8	33	A:4.71±2.29M:0
16	29	3	22	1	23	0	2	0	3	16	A:3.13±2.04
17	29	3	12	3	33	2	4	0	6	8	A:3.79±2.39
18	27	1	15	3	32	1	5	1	7	7	A:3.88±2.42
19	14	2	13	2	25	1	6	1	16	20	A:3.85±2.04M:9
2	55	6	15	1	18	0	2	0	2	0	A:2.40±1.92
21	6	1	9	1	23	2	12	1	24	22	M:5 9 0
22	7	1	11	2	23	1	7	0	15	31	M:3 5 9 0
23	19	3	14	3	22	2	8	1	16	13	A:3.67±2.04M:9
24	17	3	14	2	44	3	12	1	2	4	A:4.31±2.03
25	5	2	9	3	31	5	13	3	11	19	A:5.45±2.14
26	40	4	17	3	13	0	3	0	0	20	A:2.46±1.78

Fig. 3. Results of the Japanese survey. Survey questions (Q) and responses in percent (1:yes/very; 5:sometimes; 9:no, 0: no opinion, for Q26 only 1:positive; 5: neutral; 9: negative; 0: no option). Right hand column shows averages (A), standard deviations (±), and/or high incidences (M).

Only three of the six general questions (1, 2, and 24) and five of the 20 survey questions show noticeable differences.

The university students have less wish to stydy with a non-Japanese language instructor (Question 1, 2.6±2.0 vs. 1.3±1.0), they enjoy the study less (Q. 2, 3.7±2.4 vs. 1.9±1.6), and they are less serious about the study (Q. 24, 5.5±2.4 vs. 4.3±2.0).

The university students are less interested in using the non-Japanese language instructor as a resource in linguistic matters (Q. 8, 3.1±2.3 vs. 2.0±1.7). They find the non-Japanese language instructor less good at teaching grammar (Q. 13, 4.4±vs. 3.6±2.1) and writing (Q. 14, 4.2±2.4 vs. 3.3±2.1).

The response to the learning about non-Japanese culture is lower (Q. 18, 17% vs. 27% answering 1, and 7% vs. 15% marking 9). They are more ambiguous about the

customs and value change (Q. 19), with more marking higher on the answering scale. The university student responses to these two questions were less focused and a numerical average was not calculated.

The differences are perhaps what could intuitively be expected from the different situations of the two groups of students. The university students' compulsory study in generally large somewhat impersonal classes with little access to the instructor, versus the students in private schools studying as a result of a felt need in smaller classes with an instructor who is more available.

The very small differences in the averages for the remaining questions may point to the response averages representing population means for at least the Sapporo area. Two of the general questions fall in this category and show a high degree of agreement of the necessity of studying with non-Japanese language instructors (Q. 3), and the influence of these language instructors on Japanese society (Q. 26).

Survey questions with especially high agreement between the responses of the two groups are about respect for non-Japanese language instructors as instructors (Q. 5), their ability to teach pronunciation (Q. 12), and the customs and ways they teach being different from the local ones (Q. 16).

Also in this category are Question 4 (respect for the instructors as persons) and Question 11 (ability to teach conversation and speaking). Question 20 (learning to relax with non-Japanese) may also fall into this category although no numerical average is given for the university students due to the wider spread in the responses.

The Essay Question

The survey questions were followed by a question where a written response was requested. This essay question (Please list positive and negative aspects of studying with a non-Japanese language instructor) was added to provide substantiation and detail to the questions of the survey, and the responses are detailed in Fig. 4.

Mainly positive aspects were brought up, but slightly over 6 % of the respondents mentioned various negative aspects.

Fig. 4 shows the number of students who responded with specific items. The most frequently mentioned was that the non-Japanese language instructor helps to improve pronunciation, this was mentioned by over 40 % of the C1E students, and the lowest incidence was among C2nE students (about 17%).

The non-Japanese language instructor using living English was mentioned by an average of one student in seven, by one in four of the A2nE students, and only one in 27 of the C1E students.

The help with socialization (*nare*) was mentioned by one student in eight. The desirability of the non-Japanese language instructor knowing more Japanese was mentioned by about 4%, and two thirds of these were A2nE students.

About one student in five left the essay question blank, and about 30 % of the students mentioned matters that do not fit into the above categories. These matters included the instructors poor handwriting, Japanese superiority in grammar knowledge,

Student group	A2nE	A2E	BlnE	ClE	C2nE	C2E	Total	%
Response								
Total respondents	303	89	86	136	101	106	830	100.0
Good prcnunciation	100	17	18	57	17	28	237	28.6
Use living English	73	7	17	5	5	13	120	14.5
Helps socialization	38	12	10	25	5	14	104	12.5
Learns culture, ways	9	16	4	28	16	18	91	11.0
Better Japanese please	55	8	6	8	8	4	89	10.7
More spoken English	12	9	4	3	6	4	38	4.6
Difficult to understand	23	1	0	1	3	3	31	3.7
No response	54	15	14	6	44	29	162	19.5
Other	83	31	37	47	21	32	251	30.2
Total	447	116	110	180	125	145	1123	135.3

Fig. 4: Responses to the essay question: List positive and negative aspects of studying with a non-Japanse language instructor. Figures show the number of responses.

the more practical English used by the non-Japanese language instructor, the lessons being interesting and enjoyable, and a plea for keeping religion out of the English study (college A students only).

Overall the responses seem to indicate that the non-Japanese language instructor provides a challenging and interesting learning experience that is welcomed by the students. This is not widely different from the responses of the students in private language schools (Christensen and Upson, 1985).

Conclusions

The responses to the survey must be treated with some caution, and without further investigation it would be rash to draw final conclusions from the data reported here.

However, with the results from the survey of students at private language schools, it could be concluded that the non-Japanese language instructors are seen as a positive aspect that helps in the learning of foreign languages (here English). The value of these instructors may be seen to lie in their using English in a natural and flexible fashion. The non-Japanese language instructors are not evaluated as role models or social change agents.

References:

Christensen, Torkil, and Thomas H. Upson. Attitudes to and of non-Japanese Language Instructors in Japan. Presentation at JALT '85, 9/14-16 in Kyoto, Japan.

Upson, Thomas H, and Torkil Christensen. Our students are comfortable with us and respect us but we are not all social change agents! *The Language Teacher*. Vol8 No. 9, September 1984.

Appendix

The survey questions in the Japanese survey:

1. あなたは外国語の勉強は，できれば外国人語学講師に習いたいと思いますか？ (Do you wish to study foreign languages with a non-Japanese instructor?)
2. 外国語を習うのは楽しいですか？ (Do you enjoy studying foreign languages?)
3. あなたにとって語学学習の必要性は？ (How necessary is foreign language study for you?)
4. あなたは，外国人語学講師を，人間として尊敬できると思いますか？ (Do you respect non-Japanese language instructors as persons?)
5. あなたは，外国人語学講師を語学教師として尊敬できると思いますか？ (Do you respect non-Japanese language instructors as language instructors?)
6. あなたは，外国人語学講師を模範的人物だと思いますか？ (Do you consider non-Japanese language instructors role models?)
7. あなたは，外国人語学講師の教えてくれる情報は信頼できると思いますか？ (Do you trust the information you get from non-Japanese language instructors?)
8. あなたは，語学学習について，外国人語学講師の助言を求めたいと思うことがありますか？ (Would you ask for assistance from non-Japanese language instructors in language learning matters?)
9. あなたは，他のどのような事柄についても，外国人語学講師の助言を求めたいと思うことがありますか？ (Would you ask for assistance from non-Japanese language instructors about other matters?)
10. 外国人語学講師の存在が，社会的変化の動因になると思いますか？ (Are non-Japanese language instructors social change agents?)
11. 外国人語学講師には会話あるいは話し方を教える力量がある，と思いますか？ (Are non-Japanese language instructors good at teaching conversation and speaking?)
12. 外国人語学講師には発音を教える力量がある，と思いますか？ (Are non-Japanese language instructors good at teaching pronunciation?)
13. 外国人語学講師には文法を教える力量があると思いますか？ (Are non-Japanese language instructors good at teaching grammar?)
14. 外国人語学講師には,書き方を教える力量があると思いますか？(Are non-Japanese language instructors good at teaching writing?)
15. 外国人講師は，あなたのものの考え方やマナーの模範になると思いますか？ (Are non-Japanese language instructors rolemodels for your way of thinking and manners?)
16. 外国人語学講師から教わった習慣やマナーは，日本の習慣やマナーと異なっていると思いますか？ (Are the customs and ways taught by non-Japanese language instructors different from Japanese customs and ways?)
17. 外国人語学講師に習うことにより，あなたは，外国の習慣を学んでいると思いますか？ (Do you learn non-Japanese customs when you study with non-Japanese language instructors?)
18. 外国人語学講師に習うことにより，あなたは外国の文化について学んでいると思いますか？ (Do you learn non-Japanese culture when you study with non-Japanese language instructors?)
19. 外国人語学講師に習うことにより，あなたの習慣や価値観が変化することがあると思いますか？ (Did your customs and values change by studying with non-Japanese language instructors?)

20. 外国人語学講師に習うことにより，あなたは，外国人に慣れることができると思いますか？ (Do you learn to relax with non-Japanese when you study with non-Japanese language instructors?)
21. 外国人語学講師によって，あなたのライフスタイルが変化することがあると思いますか？ (Has your lifestyle changed by studying with non-Japanese language instructors?)
22. 外国人講師によって，あなたのライフスタイルやマナーがよりよくなると思いますか？ (Do your lifestyle and manners improve when you study with non-Japanese language instructors?)
23. 外国語学習により，あなたのライフスタイルが変化することがあると思いますか？ (Does your lifestyle change by studying foreign languages?)
24. あなたは外国語の勉強を一生懸命していますか？ (Are you studying foreign languages seriously?)
25. 外国人語学講師に習って，あなたの語学能力は思ったとうりに上達したと思いますか？ (Did your linguistic ability improve as you expected by studying with a non-Japanese language instructor?)
26. 外国人語学講師の存在が，日本社会に与える影響について，あなたはどのように考えますか？ (What influence do non-Japanese language instructors have on Japanese society?)

Essay Question

1. 外国人語学講師の存在について，その利点及び短所と思われる点について述べてください。 (Please list positive and negative aspects of studying with a non-Japanese language instructor.)